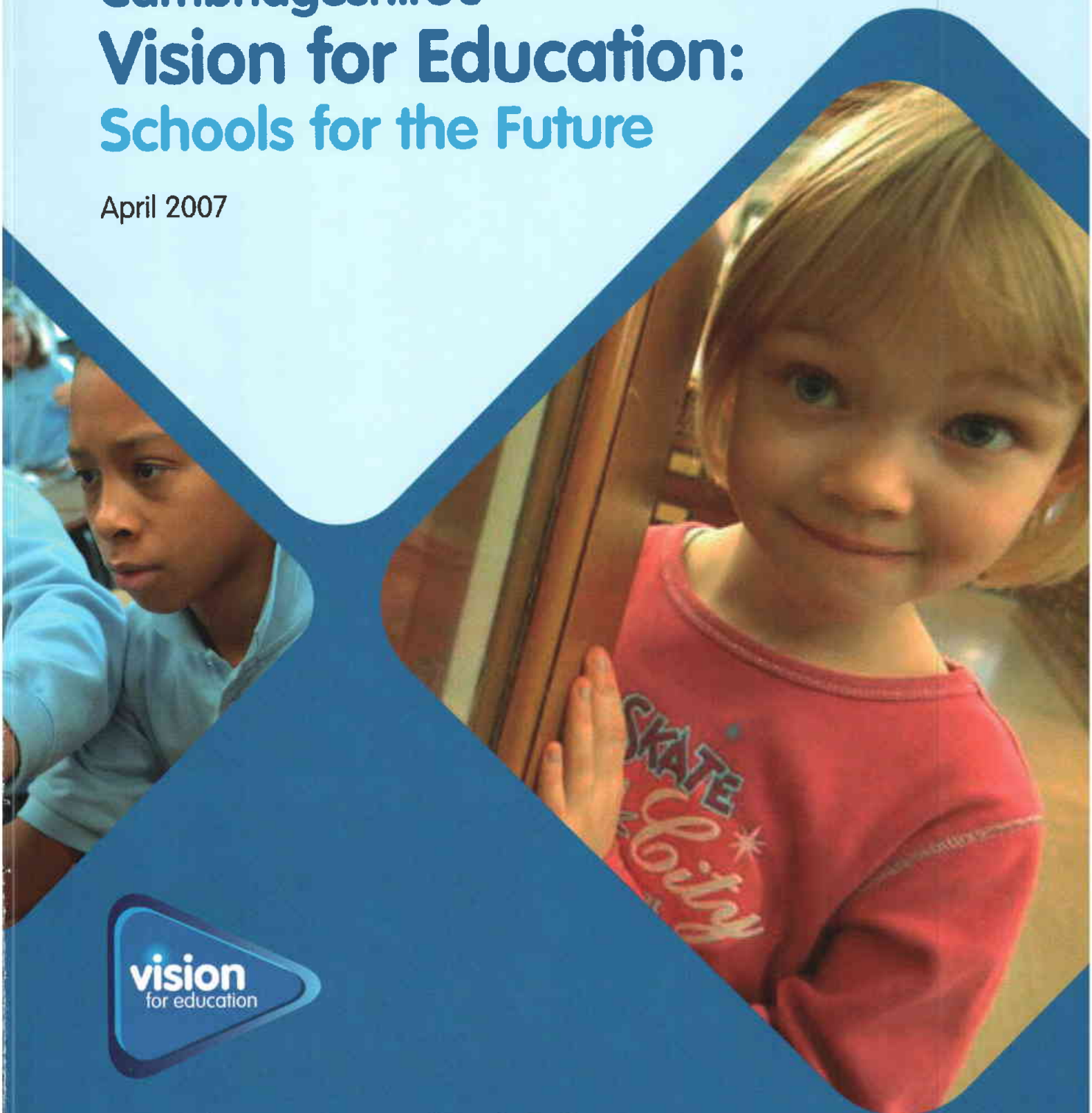
Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire's Vision for Education: Schools for the Future

April 2007



vision for education

"Keep the young generations in hail,
And bequeath them no tumbled house."

Meredith – 'The Empty Purse'

"...creating a vision forces us to take a stand for a preferred future."

Peter Block - 'The Empowered Manager'

Cambridgeshire's Vision for Education: Schools for the Future

INTRODUCTION

Context

Cambridgeshire's Educational Vision for Schools for the Future is rooted firmly in the county's overarching aspiration 'Achieving the Potential of Children and Young People in Cambridgeshire'. It reflects our intentions to meet the challenges of 'Every Child Matters' and more specifically our six medium-term key outcomes:

- Improving the emotional and physical health and well-being of children and young people and those with responsibility for their care
- Raising the aspirations of young people to improve their employment and life prospects
- Developing supportive communities which provide opportunities for children and young people to participate fully
- Achieving better outcomes for children looked after by the local authority
- Raising the educational performance for all young people
- Ensuring that all young people can lead safe and secure lives free from unreasonable risk.

Targets and detailed action plans to support progress for these outcomes are included in the Children and Young People's Plan (The Big Plan).

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Developing the Vision

A range of stakeholders has been involved in each stage of the development of the Vision, including: children and young people, headteachers, governors, councillors, representatives of the diocese, unions, LSC and FE colleges and Local Authority Officers.

Those involved in developing the Vision have been aware of how difficult it is to envisage the shape of learning in ten or twenty years time. The challenge has been to avoid being bound by time-related detail whilst not producing something so general as to be of limited use. We wish to have a Vision that will promote 'change capable' schools, will stand the test of time and can be interpreted to reflect developments of the future. We have, therefore, deliberately tried not to focus on specific subject areas, nor to define 'the curriculum'. Nonetheless, we remain committed to the ongoing need for the curriculum to provide for the development of basic skills.

Vision to reality

The Vision reflects the aspirations of the Local Authority for learners in all its schools. It has been developed both to inform all new school buildings, including those in the Building Schools for the Future Programme, but also to guide all schools in reviewing their own educational vision. The intention is that schools use the Vision as a stimulus for discussion.

The county Vision is specific enough to brief designers of any new building on the overall concept required. The details will vary for each school. In order to support colleagues in schools, we will provide a set of questions to prompt thinking about the application of the county Vision to the development of the school's local vision and the design of the new building or refurbishment, for example number, size and use of spaces.

The principles and characteristics of the Vision highlight the importance of involving all stakeholders, especially the workforce and the children and young people, in developing the local vision. This Vision is about how we aim to meet the needs of our young people in the first third of the 21st century. Comments from children and young people about what is important to them informed the development of the Vision.

"Excellence is not an expectation to live up to, but a possibility to live into."

Benjamin Zander – 'The Art of Possibility'

Overarching principles

The school for the future will

Promote an enjoyment of learning, the highest possible achievement in all its forms and a sense of success for all learners through:

- a stimulating and engaging curriculum
- effective personalised learning
- a commitment to lifelong learning
- flexibility and adaptability of organisation, layout and use to meet changing needs.

Develop confident and responsible children and young people through:

- personal and social development
- opportunities for participation and active citizenship
- a safe, health-promoting, secure and inclusive environment
- valuing diversity and respecting the individual.

Be a source of pride and resource for the local community through:

- partnership working
- inspirational design and layout
- extended and integrated services for children, young people and adults
- being a role model for sustainability.

What children and young people told us...

This symbol shows some of the many comments from children and young people in primary, secondary and special schools.

Principle:

Promote an enjoyment of learning, the highest possible achievement in all its forms and a sense of success for all learners.

Teachers to find out how we learn best, what we need and make learning work for us.

Recognition that we are all different.

Characteristics of the principle:

a stimulating and engaging curriculum

- developing an aptitude and appetite for lifelong learning
- innovative and evolving, and responsive to learners' interests and learning needs
- incorporating a shift of emphasis from teacher to learner
- promoting new approaches to, and definitions of, inspirational teaching
- promoting an ethos where learning is enjoyable and valued
- allowing learners to make connections between different learning disciplines
- outward-looking, providing a national and global perspective and adopting best practice from Cambridgeshire and beyond
- drawing on resources from the local community
- aligned with and making full use of changing ICT and multi-media technologies
- enabling learners to choose between different pathways and offering a wide range of real vocational opportunities
- encouraging continued participation in education or training
- making appropriate use of specialist external expertise and learning experiences beyond the classroom
- providing an entitlement to cultural opportunities for all and encouragement for learners to learn from, about and with other cultures
- fostering independent and collaborative learning and encouraging a diverse range of teaching/learning styles
- promoting an appropriate emphasis on eco-learning and environmental education for the 21st century.

Principle:

Promote an enjoyment of learning, the highest possible achievement in all its forms and a sense of success for all learners.

effective personalised learning

- shaping the system to the learner, not the learner to the system
- starting from where each learner is and identifying with them the 'what' and 'how' of their future learning
- celebration of all forms of success
- identifying where learning can most effectively take place
- genuine responsiveness to 'pupil voice' – particularly in relation to teaching and learning issues
- opportunities for learning together and from each other
- active engagement of parents and carers in their child's education
- blended learning approaches
- a flexible curriculum to meet individual needs
- well-informed and resourced support for learner progression within, and transition between, phases of education
- coaching and mentoring for all who would benefit
- appropriate emphasis on 'learning to learn'
- strong emphasis on support for socialisation and personal development in the most holistic sense.
- schools and colleges operating collaboratively to enable specialised accreditation to be accessed at every level
- vocational learning to high industrial standards.

The opportunity to feed back to teachers about what makes a good lesson; then the teachers can tell us how we can help.

Someone to sort out children's individual issues swiftly and in confidence.

Principle:

Promote an enjoyment of learning, the highest possible achievement in all its forms and a sense of success for all learners.

Coming back to learn at whatever age.

a commitment to lifelong learning

- adults and young people learning together
- schools as hubs for lifelong learning
- maximum community access combined with unobtrusive, state of the art security
- use of display to celebrate lifelong learning and achievement
- facilitation of effective transition within and across institutions.

flexibility and adaptability of organisation, layout and use to meet changing needs

- creating a sense of belonging through appropriate school organisation provision for learners with specific learning or behavioural needs
- large and small learning areas, for example breakaway rooms, study spaces and cyber café-type learning environments, linked so as to allow flexible use
- buildings which promote professional collaboration
- state of the art sports, arts, technical and scientific facilities
- portable/flexible ICT provision
- communal, multi-purpose spaces but avoidance of large, single-use spaces
- open-plan spaces for administrative/support staff, facilitating sharing of workloads
- design that supports a changing workforce and changing patterns of learning
  - design that supports team working and inter-team working
  - schools that emphasise and value research and development work
  - buildings that support and reflect new models of leadership, eg distributed, federated.

A thinking room. *A place where you could sit and think – and have access to notepads and have comfy seats'.*

Things we can hold – laptops, wireless technology.

Characteristics of the principle: personal and social development

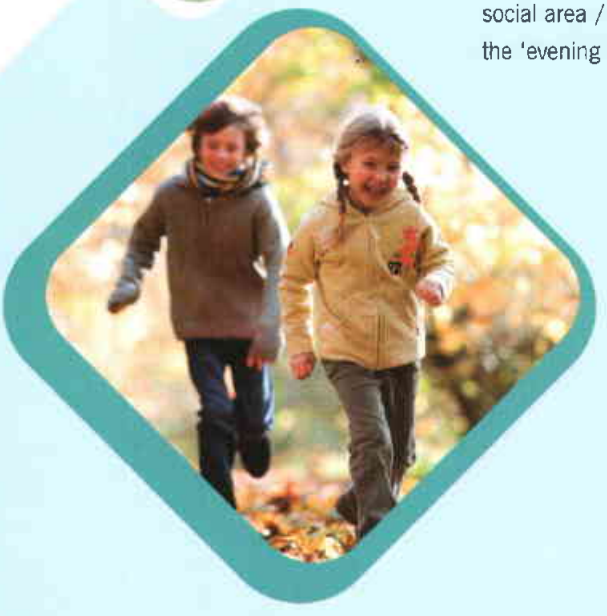
Help eachother in big and bad circumstances.

- promoting emotional well-being
- opportunities for socialisation, indoors and outdoors, eg break out areas, picnic benches
- socialisation areas that allow separateness, transition and togetherness
- opportunities for children and young people to learn independence appropriate to their age, eg a secure outdoor area for early years children, a common room for teenagers
- encouraging creativity, exploration and risk taking, eg a wild area with a hut with see-through walls for infant children

Good sports facilities on site that can be used at all times in the day and evening.

- enabling a choice of leisure and recreation activities, eg zoned areas for ball games
- meeting specific personal and social development needs, eg a multi-sensory environment in a special school
- access enabling independence, eg an 'evening only' entrance, social area /storage/toilets nearby the 'evening only' activity.

Bigger sensory room/lights room.



The school for the future will develop confident and responsible children and young people.

opportunities for participation and active citizenship

An environment that reflects different countries and cultures and how we can learn from each other.

- opportunities for learners to develop skills of participation and citizenship through engaging with school decision-making and the wider community
- a young persons' office located near to the senior management team, offering easy access to the school's leadership
- spaces that children and young people can make their own – social areas, recreation and leisure areas, confidential areas
- opportunities for enterprise work – for fund-raising, business enterprise
- opportunities for dialogue between young people and adults – a 'moot hall'
- opportunities for learners of whatever age to participate in the maintenance and development of the building eg recycling facilities should be provided that even the youngest of children can use.

a safe, health promoting, secure and inclusive environment

Vandal-proof schools, so that there won't be any broken windows.

We want it to be strong and safe.

- security ensured through different types of systems and procedures in different parts of the school:
  - a single entrance to the building, consisting of a lobby and an inner door controlled by intercom
  - as much of the school's site as possible having clear lines of view from the main building(s)
  - parts of the site monitored by CCTV
  - all boundaries clear and well marked but the type of boundary should be varied, eg fence, bush, path.

Separate eating areas (outside, inside, café style, buffet style etc).

- classrooms, corridors and stairways as spacious as possible
- corridors limited in number as much as is possible
- vehicular access and parking clearly signposted – drop off/pick up points easy to manage
- all aspects of the building should be age appropriate
- furniture practical for the purpose eg the cafeteria, the IT suite, patio furniture
- a variety of eating spaces, eg the cafeteria, a place to eat packed lunches, formal (sit up), casual (sit down in comfy chairs)
- a variety of social and play spaces, eg somewhere to talk, somewhere to play football, somewhere to walk - for children, young people and adults
- fresh water readily and freely available
- access to health and support services
- toilets and changing facilities of the highest standard – easy to maintain and respecting privacy.

valuing diversity and respecting the individual

Welcoming and friendly schools. *'Then we will be welcoming and friendly too'*. People who look after and protect each other.

- not discriminating against age, gender, ethnicity, ability, disability, sexuality or faith
- users' comfort given a high priority in building design and operation
- there should be reflection spaces, eg prayer rooms
- meeting spaces should be welcoming and inclusive
- providing for the development of different skills and aspirations
- Disability Discrimination Act compliance must aspire to the best, not to the minimum standard.

Will there be wide doors and lifts?

The school for the future will be a source of pride and resource for the local community.

Characteristics of the principle:

partnership working

- working with the community to develop a joint vision and aspiration for the school in order to achieve more together
- auditing local extended learning and community facilities to avoid replication and competition, whilst ensuring that gaps are provided for
- jointly commissioning services around common priorities ensuring that resources are pooled where it will lead to better outcomes
- seeking to develop facilities that enable the full resource of the community and local providers to be brought together to support and meet local needs, including the joint use of accommodation where appropriate.

Community facilities.

inspirational design and layout

- developing a welcoming and inspirational centre for learning in which the community can take a pride during the lifetime of the building
- ensuring the features of the practical and the attractive combine to engage and stimulate the user in a unique design and layout, in both internal and external environments
- promoting a collaborative design process, involving all stakeholders, including children and young people, to ensure that the buildings are flexible, adaptable and sustainable
- exploiting the elements of flexibility, adaptability and sustainability to enable the building to cater for changes in:
  - teaching styles
  - learning styles
  - new technologies
  - stakeholders' needs
  - service providers
  - specialist status
  - location and layout
  - inclusion policies

Calm colours; we want to be involved in decisions about colours.

Principle:

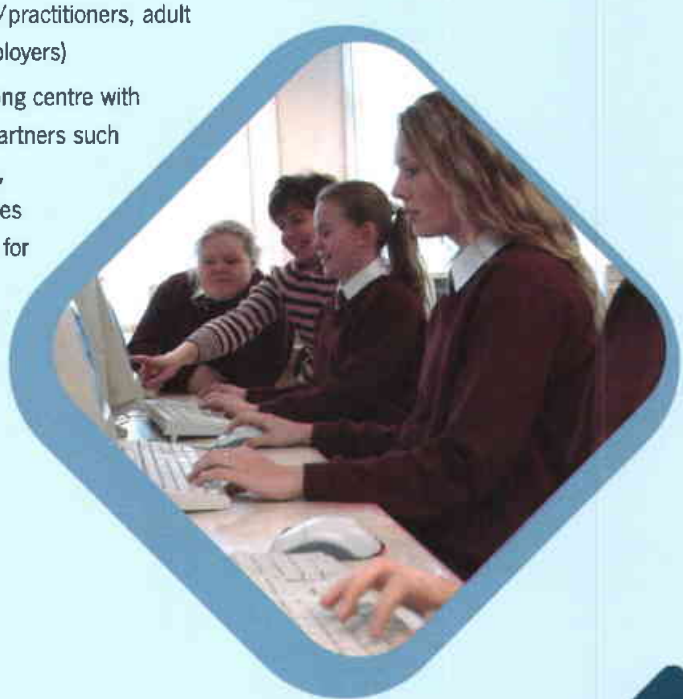
The school for the future will be a source of pride and resource for the local community.

Trees, bushes, pond life and animals. Every class having an extension area outside (like reception classes do).

- giving consideration to the shape of the space and the challenges of multi-usage of spaces, buildings and resources; testing designs for the capacity to cope with the numbers of learners envisaged
- planning for the building to stand the test of time in terms of its durability and flexibility.

extended and integrated services for children, young people and adults

- the school as hub for multi-agency support
- providing a multi-agency approach ('one stop shop') enabling the community to readily access services
- ensuring that local needs are correctly identified, taking into account the views of the full community (children, young people, parents/carers, professionals/practitioners, adult learners, employers)
- being a learning centre with key links to partners such as employers, so that facilities can be used, for example, for the training of young adults and workers.



Principle:

The school for the future will be a source of pride and resource for the local community.

A building that is environmentally friendly, solar panels, a building that is low on maintenance.

Could we recycle rainwater?

being a role model for sustainability

- modelling and delivering sustainable practice within the local community
- minimising the carbon footprint of the school by managing and monitoring energy use and adopting renewable energy technologies
- minimising waste and fully utilising recycling opportunities
- minimising the use of transport
- maximising local/ethical sourcing
- encouraging bio-diversity
- minimising water consumption
- integrating sustainability principles into learning
- sharing spaces and facilities to encourage sustainable lifestyles with the wider community.

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"We cannot afford poverty of vision, let alone poverty of aspiration. There are always risks in changing, but the risk of failing to change is much greater."
Valerie Bayliss – 'Redefining Schooling'

If you would like further copies of this booklet, or the text on audio cassette, in Braille, large print or other languages, please contact Dawn Rogers on:

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or email:

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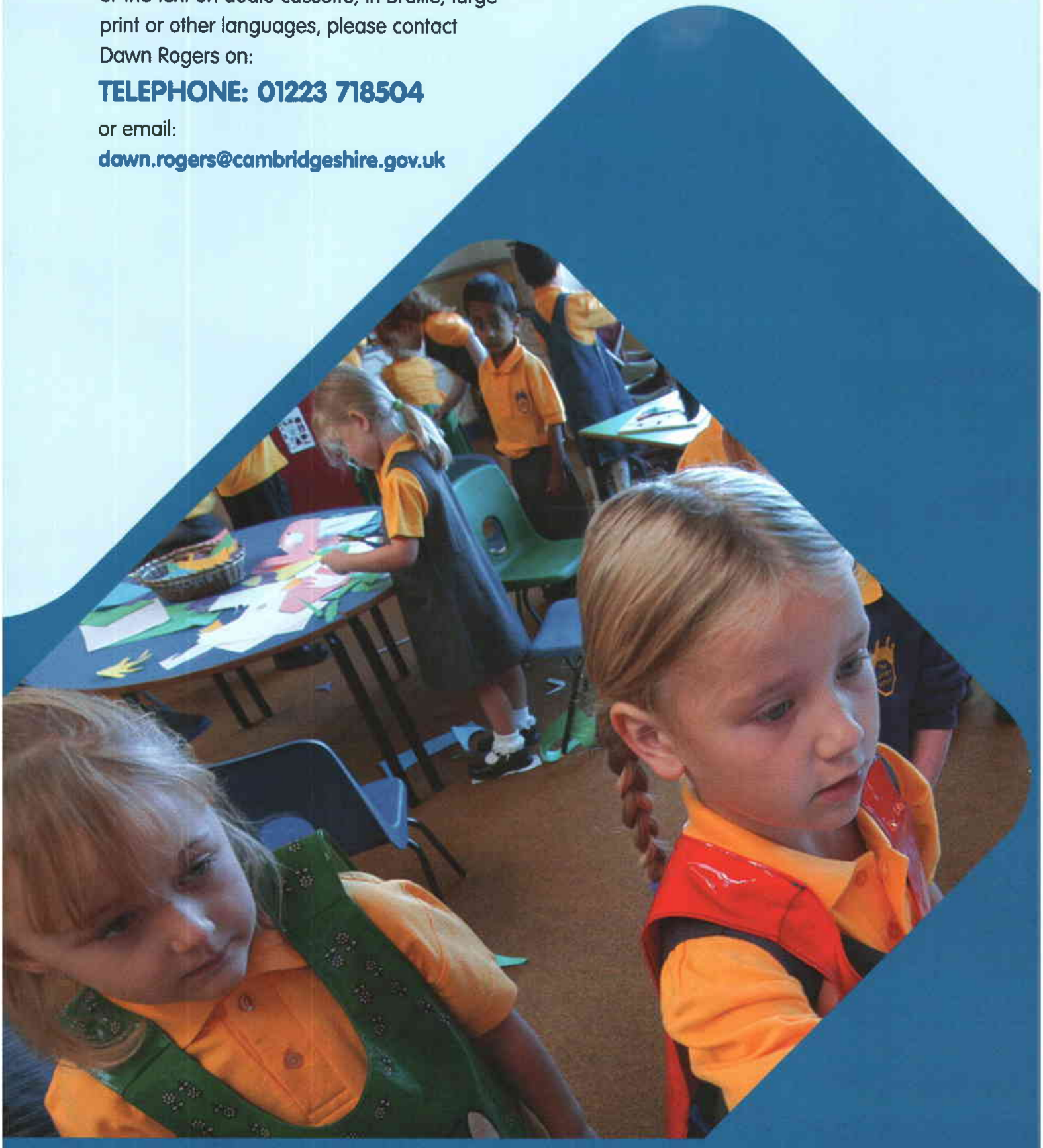

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CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES